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000 An Account of the Island of Guadeloupe
(Relation de L'Ile de la Guadeloupe)

By Raymond Breton and Armand de la Paix

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THE CARIBS, GUADELOUPE, PART TWO

The Origin, Customs, Religion, and Other Practices Of The Caribs, Commonly Called Savages, Early Inhabitants Of Guadeloupe

147 114 As our mission was established principally for the instruction of the
infidel savages, it is necessary to describe their origins and customs,
for a knowledge of the temperament of those with whom we deal will
make it easier to judge the ultimate success of the mission. We re-
count here only what is certain. Father Raymond Breton, a missionary
monk who conversed nearly two years with the savages and who learned
their language well in that time (1), was able to learn their customs

1. Parisian version: "Father Raymond, ...
learned their language so well that during that
time he was able. ..." (See: Joseph Renard,
Les Caraïbes, La Guadeloupe (The Caribs,
Guadeloupe), Paris, 1929. pp. 5-18.)

and ceremonies. He witnessed nearly all of these or learned of them
first hand, at least as far as those of Dominica are concerned. In the
other islands they have other notions, as we have seen from the re-
port of Father Meslan, a Jesuit who has visited the savages of
Martinique.

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CHAPTER I

The Origin and Temperament of The Savages

101 174 Nothing can be made of all their fancies and lies concerning their
origins except that they are descended from the people of the main-
land closest to the islands. That much is certain. The friendship
they maintain with them and the commerce with them are signs of
101 it, as is the uniformity of the name they call themselves—kallinago
[callinago] in the men's language and kalliponam [calliponam] in

C
[16] the women's language. However, to make some distinction between themselves and the people of the mainland, they call the latter balabouart, from the word balloart, which means mainland; thus a callinago of the mainland is distinguished in the same way as one would classify a Frenchman as a Parisian or a Langosta. We call these people of the mainland who are friends of our savages Gallybis Gallybis—and call our savages Caribbes Caribb.

C
[17] If you ask the latter why they separated from the mainlanders and moved to the islands, they can give no reason. However, they all say that their first father, Callinago, left the mainland with his family and settled in Dominica. There he had a long line of descendants, and the nephews of his nephews, with extreme cruelty, [17] poisoned him. But he was changed into a fish of monstrous size, which they call Akaïouman and which is still very much alive in their river. At least this fable shows that they are descended from the people of the mainland.

C
[17] Several of the French believe that there were earlier inhabitants of these islands whom the Caribs chased away. This belief is founded upon the fact (and it is even certain according to the savages) that in some of the islands there are still survivors of these people, who retreated to the mountains and who are white like the French and wear long beards. Monsieur d'Ynambur, governor of Saint Christopher, assured Father Raymond et cetera that there were some on Saint Christopher. The Caribs affirm [17] that there are some at Guadeloupe and that they dwell above the large river at Goyave and at Grande-Terre. It is certain that there are some at Dominica be-

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[17] because they are often seen there. The first time Father Raymond was [17] at Dominica in 1642, the Caribs had captured a man, a woman, and [17] a girl of these people by surprise. They killed and ate the man, and enslaved the woman and girl. Last year, on the same day Father Raymond arrived, the mountaineers had made a raid, burned a cabin, and carried off a few household goods.

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[17] Our Caribs, however, say in one of their trusted traditions that [17] they killed the Allouagues, (first) inhabitants of the islands, (1)

1. Roman version: "Our Caribs... say... that they are the first inhabitants of the islands and that the people in the mountains... etc."

^C
[17] and that the people in the mountains are the slaves of the Allouagues
[17] who fled to the mountains and lived there. The result is that now they
[17] only rarely show mercy to male slaves, but rather they kill and eat
[17] them. The reason they are white may be because of the cold.

^C
[17] Regarding their appearance, the Caribs are of good stature and well-
[17] proportioned, strong, robust, usually fat, and healthy. They are not
[17] at all deformed except that several are flat-nosed, because their
mothers flattened their foreheads and noses at birth. Their natural
color is a very tanned olive. They seem redder because of the
[17] amatto (rocou or urucy) they redder themselves with every day. They
all have black hair and cannot tolerate red or blond hair. Very few
of them are bald, and they make fun of those who are. They are no
more thieving than the French, and even less so.

^C
[17] As for their temperament, they are all melancholic, sad, and
somber; and their faces show it. They rarely speak if not spoken to.
For savages they are not too stupid. They are curious about and very
skillful in the things they apply themselves to, such as making beds
and baskets, fishing, hunting, and shooting the bow and arrow. They
climb swiftly and nimbly, jump and [17] swim, and would undoubtedly
be capable of greater things.

A young man who was a captive among them told them some story
from the Holy Scripture; they questioned him about it and conceived
doubts that were not without point.

They are rather generous among themselves and give each other
what they have; in like fashion they ask freely. They do not act in
this way with us, the French, because they give us nothing and are
always asking for something and are not discouraged by a refusal.

They are not naturally cruel, except toward their enemies. They
are dangerous when intoxicated and fight among themselves, but out-
side of that they are easy to get along with.

They are extremely lazy and would rather eat less and work less.
They scarcely think of tomorrow and stock no provisions except
manioc and sweet potatoes which they plant in season. Very often
they find themselves short. They care for neither gold, silver, nor
^C precious stones.

^C
[17] They have their work divided between the men and women. Their
honor is offended if they are not esteemed for what they think they
are. The men never touch the ordinary work of women, believing
that they would degenerate.

635 that they would degenerate. For all that, they live contentedly and would certainly be happy if the Christian religion were to temper a little their barbarity and filth.

646 One asks why there are so few of them, given the multitudes of women. They reply that the Christians are to blame, because, as one of them told Father Raymond, the Spanish on two occasions massacred all the Caribs on the island of Saint Christopher, and once those of Guadeloupe, from which it is said only one woman escaped to the mountains with her children to people that region. The Spanish wanted to do the same at Dominica and massacred a good half of the [146] Caribs there. Since then the Caribs have been victims of smallpox, which they call variola, and of which several rotted and died, since they did not yet know a remedy for this disease. In short, they have been captured or killed by everybody: Flemish, English, Spanish, and the Allouagues, who are their enemies.

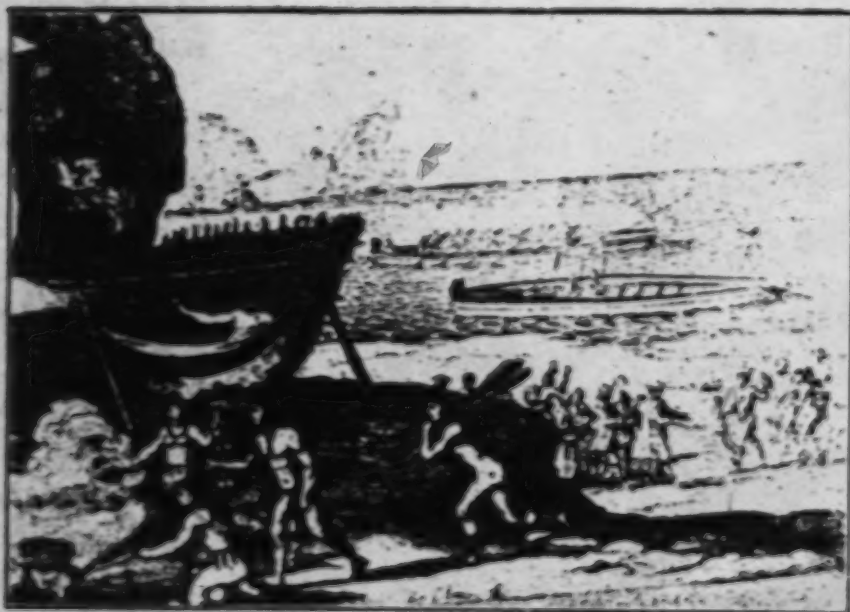
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CHAPTER II

Their Language

191 The language of the Caribs is different from that of the Galibis of the mainland. It is difficult to learn for several reasons. The first is that they do not record it in writing or in any character. It therefore requires great patience in listening and close attention to distinguish their words, which they spout out rapidly, and also a great memory to retain what one has been able to gather. The second is that they have several sorts of languages. The men have theirs and the women theirs, and there is still another for harangues and important speeches that even the young people do not understand well. The third is that they have no words at all to express the powers of the soul, such as the will, the understanding, nor any words for what concerns religion or politeness. They have no term of honor such as 'Our Father.' They express, however, several acts of the understanding and of the will, such as to remember and to wish. In other things the tongue is copious and rather petty. They sometimes sing their songs in a tone which is not agreeable and is very simple. They sing whatever occurs to them without rhyme and very often without reason, especially against their enemies.

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Caribs and Europeans
according to Father du Tertre

601 They call each other by terms which signify degrees of kinship on the father's side or by marriage, as father, brother, cousin; others they call companion [compère].

551 They never name a person by his name, particularly if he is re-
572 lated. If they are compelled to name him, they say only half of the word. They often adopt the name of someone with whom they have contracted a particular friendship or companionship.

196 They have a jargon or special language (1) which they use in

1. Rom. version: "corrupt language."

dealing with us, and which is Spanish, French, and Carib all mixed up together.

[59]

CHAPTER III

Their Religion, or Rather Superstitions

712 It is better to say that the Caribs have no religion, Because they
[77] do not even know the word for it, nor for prayer, church, or worship. They recognize, however, something in the way of a deity to which they render some duty, not by any love but merely for fear he will do them some harm. At the beginning of every revel or feast, they offer him the first morsels of the banquet. In a corner they put a matoutou (which is a sort of low stool made of rushes like their baskets) for him and place the best cassava they have upon it, along with gourds full of ouicou [a kind of beer], which is their usual drink. They do the same when they clear a wood to make a garden. They believe that this god eats what they offer him. Even though they find it as they left it, they say it is not the same. They believe there are

[76] male and female among the gods, who are many. They often consult them, whether for the success of their wars or for the end of their sicknesses. The gods answer them, but here is how: there are
76 several of the Caribs, men and women, who are devoted and conse-
77 crated to these gods from their early youth, and who alone make them appear and speak to them. They are called bofé [Boye] or bofakko, and they fast for a long time and abstain from many things.

756 Each boye has his god and sometimes two. These gods are all that
 776 these scoundrels want, and inflict sickness or cure whom they will.
 787 So when the Caribs want to know the issue of a war or a sickness they
 call a boye. This masquerader comes at night, carefully puts out
 all the fires around the hut, and enters with those who called him.
 The latter have already prepared a matoutou in the middle with the
 best cassavas and gourds of ouicou. Having entered, he sits down
 and taking some tobacco, crushes it in his hands, and blows on it
 while lifting it up with his 31 hands. Immediately the devil arrives
 and makes as much noise as if a man were jumping in the middle of
 the place while snapping his fingers and moving them all about. Then
 he speaks, answering what he is asked, and everyone hears him. If
 a sick person must die, he says he will die and does nothing for him.
 But if he is to get well, the boye and the devil (who sometimes ap-
 pears to the sick person, but merely as a male or female savage)
 work energetically on the sick part, blowing on it and making believe
 they are removing palmetto splinters or whatever they imagine is
 causing the trouble. They also suck the sores and pretend to go out-
 side to vomit the poison. With that the Caribs imagine themselves
 cured. This fine god, having made his replies, pretends to drink
 and eat what he is offered, and then, as if he had swallowed every-
 thing, shakes the gourds as if they were empty, and retires while
 stamping the ground and shaking his fingers. Our people find their
 cassavas which are on the matoutou and their gourds all as full as they
 were and say that this is different food. They think that it is a great
 miracle. They then eat and drink it before doing anything else. They
 say that this god or riose once killed a man present at these con-
 sultations because he let loose a wind which displeased the scoundrel.
 Sometimes they call several boyes, each of whom has his god.
 Then one blames the evil on the other and one hears the find gods
 argue about this, insult each other, and even, as it seems to the
 onlookers, fight.

Moreover, the devils even enter into the bodies of men to speak
 with their mouths. It once happened that a man was called half the
 night through the mouth of a woman lying in her bed; the woman re-
 membered nothing of this the next day.

756 Several Frenchmen who have been present at these mummeries be-
 787 lieve that the devil really comes and speaks and that these are not
 just tricks on the part of the boyes. Father Raymond being in the hut

754 of The Baron, who is one of the chiefs of Dominica, when they called
787 a boye for one of their sick girls [52] and made his devil appear,
heard him speak in a very clear voice. He wanted to go in with a
burning torch, but the women would not let him enter, and he did
not want to insist, since he didn't yet know the language well enough.

The wife of this chief wanted to make one of her daughters a boye,
with the help of another boye. But she could not, although the girl
was willing and fasted as ordered. The old witch used for an excuse
that the girl ate something that she had been forbidden to.

When the sick are cured, they give a feast for the boye, who some-
times also calls his devil to the celebration. The boye and this
[302 scoundrel, if he is there, blacken the sick person with dye from the
386] genipa tree to conclude the farce.

754 Some people do not call the boyes when they want to speak to the
devil. Digging in the earth where they know someone is buried, they
extract bones or hair of the dead person, and put them in a gourd
which they plug with cotton. The devil speaks to them through these
bones or hairs and claims to be the soul of the dead person.

With these bones they even cast various sorts of spells to revenge
themselves against their enemies. Some take the left-overs from the
meal of their enemy and put them next to these bones of the dead,
which, as we have said, bewitches them. Others put in blood from
a wound, as it happened with a Carib who came to find Father
Raymond at Guadeloupe in order to be baptized. Since it was not
possible, however, at the time to instruct him he was sent back.
This man, wanting to avenge the death of his brother, entered a hut
and stabbed the one he thought to be the murderer of his brother, but
who was not. The parents of the wounded man were not able to ob-
tain satisfaction, since the other had made off. They soaked cotton
in the blood of their son and put it with some of these bones, and the
assailant was overcome by a weakness that caused his death after
two years.

776 Father Raymond and his interpreter, upon asking a boye named
Sali how his god looked, were told that he was so old that his staff
821 was all shiny from having been carried so long. The boye said that
his god was the cause of storms or violent tempests.

During an eclipse of the sun or moon, they say that [53] it is
mapoya [maboya] who eats it (we shall relate in the last chapter

821/what they mean by maboya). That is why they say la'koua noquam th
the eating of the moon; la'koua vicou the eating of the sun. When
821 one or the other¹ occurs, the women and young people dance all night,
535 and once they have started to dance they dare not quit before day.
They do not sing at all during this dance, but from time to time
utter doleful cries. During this gloomy silence, there is a girl or
woman who rattles little pebbles in a gourd and sings alone. The only
reason they have for this sad dance is that their food in the ground
would die without it.

In their dances, those just mentioned as well as others of re-
joicing, they do not hold each other with their hands, but each dances
alone. They put their feet together and jump, a little bent over,
putting one hand on their head, and the other on a buttock, and change
them constantly. This dance tires them so, that finally they are
completely exhausted.

785 Among their superstitions they have none more rigorous than their
fasts, and as they fast for several reasons and at different times, we
shall speak of each in its place.

805 Let us say here what would not be more appropriate elsewhere.

They calculate their year by the course of the Pleiades, which they
[821] call siric. They know several stars and know approximately when
802 they will have rain or wind. They count no higher than five; if they
have to say ten, they say: all my fingers. If twenty, they show
their feet and their hands, and they would not know how to say any
more.

CHAPTER IV

Their Ornaments

291 Our Caribs never wear clothes, neither men nor women, except
for a few chiefs when they come among us. They do not even cover
their shameful parts. This is contrary, nevertheless, to the custom
of the savages of the mainland, [54] where both men and women
have a sort of cotton band covering what nature is ashamed to show.

302 Men and women wear their hair long; at the front they cut it half-
way up the forehead and let it hang in the style of a little girl.

¹ [i.e. An eclipse of the moon or sun.--Analyst]

302 They separate the back from the front by a part which goes from temple to temple, leaving two small moustaches at the two temples. They gather all the rest behind the head and let it hang down their
301 back. When they go somewhere, they tuck it up behind the head very neatly and tie it with cords of cotton reddened with annatto, at the end of which is a small tassel or a woman's thimble with white glass beads. Some add to that a little fine white cotton which they spread on the bundle of their hair, with different-colored feathers which they stick in. Some also make, from the same material as their baskets, a form of crown which is colored and adorned with tufts of feathers all around, above and below, while others wear a form of headband. Still others make bonnets of the same material and wear them for fear of the cold or other inconveniences. But usually they are bareheaded.

302 The women comb the men's hair and grease it with oil to make it shine and become blacker. This is the first thing they do when they are going somewhere.

They do not permit their slaves to wear long hair. They singe the hairs of their legs and arms. They do not wear beards. And it is one of their perpetual amusements, when they have the leisure,
[304] to pluck out the hairs of their beard one by one with a knife. They pierce their ears, the cartilage of the nose between the nostrils, and the lower lip, to attach pendants of various sorts.

They redden all of their body with annatto. Sometimes they make themselves all black with genipa. At their great drinking parties they have themselves painted black as a Moor in a particular fashion.

[75] They most often use annatto because it also serves to keep the sun from burning them and protects them [55] from the sharpness of the sea water.

301 They sometimes wear large necklaces of white glass beads; sometimes they wear at their neck the wings of various birds which they let dangle over their shoulders and on their stomach. Others wear necklaces made of the teeth of cats, agoutis, or of the caïcousi [caïcouchi], which is believed to be the ounce (?). Most of them wear a whistle at their necks, often made from the bones of an enemy.

They also wear scarves of corded cotton, reddened with annatto, in the form of a cross, before and behind. The scarves are sometimes made from white glass beads. With these beads, they also

301 make bracelets about four fingers wide, which are worn on the arm close to the shoulder and on the legs below the knee.

They make much of certain metal leaves in the form of a crescent or half-moon which they call karakoulis [caracolis]. This metal does not seem to be much different from red copper or brass. But it is clearer and purer, never rusts, does not redden, tarnish, nor turn green, and however long it may be in the earth it does not lose its luster. It is not, however, either gold or silver, nor one or the other mixed (together), although its color is that of gold and silver mixed. These caracolis are very rare among them; they say they come from the Allouagues, who are their enemies. For there are those among

[572
439] them who notwithstanding their usual enmity contract friendships with a few Allouagues, and when their nations go to war, they visit their friends and give them presents in exchange for which the Allouagues give them these caracolis. Others say that they got them from even farther away. However that may be, this metal is their greatest treasure; when they have some, they make little blades that they hang from their ears and nose. In case they have no caracolis, they put a liana (1) or bird feathers in their stead. They stick pins or a wire

1. Roman version: "A gain (?)."

in their pierced lower lip—for a very ugly effect. At their feet, they sometimes wear little bells, particularly to make them ring at drinking parties and dances. So much for the accoutrements of the men.

[567] The women wear their hair like the men, except that they do not wear feathers or caps but merely tie their hair with cotton tresses, which have thimbles on the ends or some other little tassel. They wear necklaces of various sorts of bone, strung in no particular order, and with crystals, of which they are very fond. They also make crystal pendants for the ears. They wear bracelets of glass beads at the wrist, not on the arm as do the men. When they are at celebrations they wear waistbands of cotton and of glass beads from which they dangle tassels of beads also, as well as many small bells which make a great deal of noise when they dance. One can best compare these waistbands to the bands put on the croups of horses for parade.

301 All the women and girls, except the slaves, wear a sort of cotton
291 hose which is woven onto the leg itself from above the ankle to the
calf of the leg. This is extremely binding, especially when new.
Above the calf they bind another band of the same material, also
woven onto the leg, so that the calf is bulged from both sides. At
the bottom of this hose is a border or hem two or three fingers wide
made of reeds, or, like most of them, of tortoise shell. When this
hose is new and wet, it hurts the women. They are careful to coat it
on the outside with oil and annatto so that water will not penetrate.
They wet themselves as little as possible. When they embark in
481 canoes, their husbands carry them. But you would never guess how
they cross streams without wetting their legs. She who has the biggest
or least uncomfortable hose, or even a man who has none, takes a
woman by the feet and pulls her along after him or her while the
one with the tight hose follows propped against his or her behind while
walking on her hands.

[51]

CHAPTER V

The Foods They Eat

262 I do not think there is a nation in the rest of the world which eats
less well than this one, although they have here the means to eat
well. But what is the difference since they are healthy, fat, and
robust without these delicacies.

[231] They do not keep cows, sheep, goats, nor pigs, and they never
eat them at home, although there are a great many pigs on Dominica;
neither do they eat fowl, chicken eggs, butter, cheese, milk, oil,

[263] or fat. They salt nothing when they eat among themselves. When
they visit us, they eat almost anything, although those who have
children abstain, as we shall see in the next chapter. At home, they
eat tortoise and white tortoise eggs, but not the yellow ones, certain
birds, and crabs. They never cook well what they eat, especially
252 the crabs. They cook the birds whole, after having burned the feathers,
on small sticks arranged a little above the fire. Once cooked, they
wrap them in leaves and smoke them. When they are ready to eat
them, they hollow them out and boil them in manioc juice with

252 pimento; and they prepare other things in this manner. They make a certain sauce with which they eat everything. They throw the bones of the fish they have eaten into a pot with a handful of pimento, manioc juice, and the finest flour, mix all this together and dip their bread and meat in it. They call that a tomaly [tomali]. The best of it is that there is always some old woman's hair and a bit of annatto in this, for they are extremely dirty. Their bread is nothing more [272] than cassava, fresh every day; their drink is ouicou, made of cassava and water. Sometimes they press pineapples or sugar cane and drink the juice, as they do water mixed with honey. In eating, they do [264] not consider it impolite to belch.

[58] They have only one regular meal a day, in the morning as soon as it is day. The rest of the day, they eat when they want to and when they have something to eat; they are always ready. The men eat apart in the large carbet, and the women and their children in their small huts.

276 They scarcely use tobacco for smoking, but they dry it at the fire, then grind it into powder, mix it with a little sea water and put it between the lip and the gum. This is very strong.

CHAPTER VI

Their Marriages and The Education of Their Children

582 As there is no police nor any laws among the Caribs, they have no certain rule for their marriages. There is no kinship prohibition. If they restrain themselves in some cases, as between parents and their children or between brothers and sisters, it is more by the powerful movement of nature that they are held back than by reason of piety or continence. There are some who, notwithstanding the voice of nature, have joined with their daughters and have had children by them, and there have been mothers who have married their sons. But those cases are usually very rare. Therefore, parents do not unite with their children, nor brothers with their sisters. A man's first [female] cousin, by his mother's sister, belongs to him; those who are daughters of brothers are considered to be sisters. Some men marry two sisters, some a mother and a daughter.

595 They have as many wives as they want, especially the chiefs and their children. They even have them on different islands. The wives live in separate little huts and sleep with their husbands in succession, one during one month, the other the next month. The one who is sleeping with the husband serves him during this time and follows him everywhere, even to sea. If they surprise their wives in adultery or [694] if the wives become pregnant by another man, they usually kill them, even though they sometimes leave them for two or three years without going to see them. The men are free to leave their wives, [597] and the wives may then remarry; but the wives do not have the right to leave their husbands. Even though the husband may have several wives, [152] these are hardly jealous, except perhaps rarely.

606 The husband never speaks to the father, mother, and brothers of his wife, unless they are drunk or are children. If he meets them on the same path, he avoids them by making a big detour. If necessity obliges them to speak, as when they are at sea, they turn their faces

585 away and cut the conversation short. They use no ceremony at all for their marriage. If the girl does not already belong to the man, [502] as the cousin issued from the [mother's] sister, he asks for her from the father or mother. They do not know what it is to speak of love.

They rarely marry without the consent of their father or mother. The [833] men do not sleep with their wives unless they are really nubile and capable of having children. When the wives are delivered of child,

846 the husbands separate from them and they do not sleep together for five or six months. And they ~~begin~~ fast—it is one of their most famous fasts—especially when their first child is a boy. The man fasts more rigorously than the woman, lest the child suffer. Father Raymond being at the home of The Baron at Dominica, went to see one of these fasters and as the Father spoke to him of this fast, the Carib told him that some men completely abstain from drinking and eating for the first five days after a childbirth by their wives, and then take nothing but some ouicou from the sixth to tenth days. After that they eat nothing but cassava and drink ouicou for the period of a month or two. Note that they eat nothing but the heart of the cassava and hang the rest with a cord for the feast. It is true that when they begin to eat, they eat and drink when they want, but nothing more than cassava and ouicou. When the day of the feast arrives, their friends assemble and one slashes the skin of the father's whole body with agouti teeth,

846 as if with a knife, until blood comes. Then the father is rubbed all over with spiced water which causes him great suffering. He is sometimes so weak from the fast and from this bleeding that he has to be led away by the hand. While the others get drunk at his expense, he continues to fast [60] for several more days. When the fast is over he does not eat, however, any birds or fish—except crabs, and they must be females—while his children are still feeble and weakly.

846 This faster gave Father Raymond very good reasons for all this.
751 It is because, he said, the infants would have stomach aches or defective members, depending on which animals their fathers ate. They would have, for example, a long, round snout if the father ate an eel; small, round eyes if he ate a parrot. (For this same reason they never eat manatees, for fear their children will have small, round eyes like this large fish.) They would have crooked legs if the father ate pigs, and so forth for the other animals.

826 We will add here in passing this amusing fact: there is a type of carangid, which is a good fish with a slightly curved backbone. When they eat this fish, they take great care not to throw the bones carelessly away; they deposit them on the ground very softly for fear they may become hunchbacked and are astonished that the French make fun of this.

304 The women, having given birth, press the forehead of their infant
857 with their hand in order to flatten it. That is the reason they have broad foreheads. When the infants sleep in the daytime, the women hold them so that their feet are on one of the mother's knees, while the head, which she continues to press with her hand, is on the other. At night, they hold the infants to their side, with the result that being accustomed to sleep so warmly, the child cries dreadfully if the mother moves ever so little away from its side.

At the end of fifteen days or three weeks, they invite a sort of godfather or godmother who pierces the ears, nose, and lower lip of the infant and cuts its hair in front and gives it its name. They, in exchange, rub his head and neck with oil. [sic] The mothers never wrap up their children when they go somewhere. They carry them under the arm in a little sling of cotton which they pass over the shoulder in the fashion of a scarf.

852 When the child is one or two years old, the father gives [61] a feast called elétotaz [elétotaz] at which the child's hair is completely

82 cut and the nose, ears, and lower lip are pierced if the child was too weak to have it done when he was very small.

95 When the boys are fairly large they eat with their fathers, and the girls eat with their mothers. The parents teach them no sort of manners and they say neither good morning, good evening, nor thank you. They are brought up in such liberty that they do only what they want, obeying their parents at their whim. The parents do not punish them. The mothers mistreat them sometimes but only in a fury or when vexed, and not to correct them.

88 When the girls begin to menstruate, they are made to fast one or two months. So are the boys when they attain their adolescence, and they are slashed with agouti teeth, as we shall indicate when we discuss their drinking parties.

768 When the father dies or leaves his wife all the children stay with
584 the mother and she takes care of them, while the husband does not bother about them any more.

548 There are women among the Caribs who become prostitutes. There
834 are no indecent words among them. Young and old, boys and girls, all call things by their names without any shame whatsoever.

CHAPTER VII

The Huts, Beds, and Pirogues of The Caribs

361 Since they have many enemies who often kidnap them, the Caribs live at Capesterre because there the approach is more difficult and more rarely leeward of the wind for the anchorage of the boats by which they fear being surprised.

621 They are divided into families, and these families are composed of several households which live together and form a sort of hamlet under the father of the family. The father's sons and daughters are
342 married and live in their own huts. They first make a large common hall [62] 60, 80, or 100 feet long, more or less, which they call a carbet. Around this large hut they build small ones for individual families.

These huts are made with forked branches stuck in the ground, joined with other pieces of wood which go from one fork to another.

342 On top they put sloping rafters which reach to the ground, and cover everything with palm leaves or reeds. One can see nothing inside except by the light of the fire or by the hole through which they enter, which is 2 or 3 cubits high. The women clean the huts, and the boys [364] clean the carbet and the space around it. During the day the men eat and talk in the carbet, and at night they retire to the small huts to sleep.

513 Their hammocks are nothing more than large pieces of woven
352 cotton which the women make on a sort of draper's loom, 3 or 4 ells
[289] wide and 5 or 6 feet long. They leave little ribbons on the two ends, to which they attach stronger ribbons made of pita, and then attach these in turn to a larger cord also made of pita. They hang the beds by means of these cords in the middle of their huts to two forks and they sleep gently and comfortably. They make small and large ones. They carry the hammocks wherever they must spend the night. The French use them commonly. Since these hammocks are easily portable, they do not clutter up the houses, and they fold easily and are stowed away conveniently. Some are brought to us from the mainland (besides those we trade with the Caribs for); the English and [531] Portugese also make them. The Caribs paint theirs in Moresque patterns with a black that never fades. Those of the mainland savages are also painted similarly.

501 After talking of their lodgings and beds, a word must be said of the boats they use at sea. We call them pirogues, they name them kanaoa [canaoa]. These are made from large trees which they hollow out with fire, as well as with hatchets, and finish with adzes. They then shape the outside in the form proper for navigation. Because they are low, they build them up by attaching boards all around with liana, which serves them [637] as cord, and caulk them with folded mahot bark. They tie poles across to serve as benches while they row. They make these boats in all sizes. Those they call canaoa are what we call pirogues and are never less than 25 or 30 feet and go up to 50 or 60 feet. Others, which we call canoes and they koullala, are of all sizes under 25 feet, some so small as to carry only one man for fishing. The canaoa are not pointed like those of the French; for they cut off the end and seal it with a board. They carry up to 40 and 50 persons with baggage. Big ones use two sails, and small ones a single sail. They row with small oars about like

small baker's scoops and row facing the front in contrast to the French who turn their backs to where they are going. These pirogues have no more draft than a small boat, no deck, or storage place, and no cover to keep beds, flour, and other goods dry other than an umbrella made of palm leaves and put over the blocks used to haul the pirogues up on the beach.

The man who organizes the voyage is captain of the pirogue, even if it does not belong to him. He gives all the orders of departure and return, and the others rely on him.

They use no dial or compass at sea. During the day they steer by the sun and at night by the stars, of which they have (knowledge). When they land, they make shelters against the rain where they may hang their beds. We call these ajoupas, which they make with banana or wild plantain leaves, or any other convenient ones: men render their father-in-law this service. They redden the back of their pirogue with a red earth that they say is the dung of a large snake they call aloubera, and which lives in a fearful cave.

[64]

CHAPTER VIII

The Labors of Our Savages and First of The Men

512 They all get up very early, before dawn, and bathe in the stream,
 442 after which they light a fire in the great hall and chat while warming themselves. Some of them play the flute, although they know nothing about playing. When day arrives the women bring the men whatever they have to eat. That done, some go fishing, others clear woods to make gardens for planting manioc or sweet potatoes, others work on their canoes, and still others make little objects of handicraft after their fashion, such as the katouli [catoli]. This is a type of [442] basket which the women carry on their backs by means of a cotton strap which they loop around their forehead, in contrast to our manner of using two straps which go under the arms and over the shoulders. These catoli are not closed behind, because the women secure whatever they put in by tying it with cords which are passed through holes on the two sides. Also, they make long baskets which fit together, the top one forming a cover for the bottom one. They make double

45 Baskets with two weaves filled with custard-apple tree leaves between, and which are impenetrable by rain. There are also hebechets [or: ibichets], which are the sacks through which they strain their manioc flour. Also, there is the couleuvre [lit: 'adder'—because of its snake-like shape?—Ed.] a kind of arm-long sock to press the flour [252] in. They attach the top to a peg and from the bottom roll a staff which they weigh down heavily, either by sitting on it or otherwise, [302] and in no time their flour is dry. Others make matoutous, which are their tables. They are low, some round, some square, a little higher 285 than a casaava. All this small handiwork which we have mentioned is made of certain large rushes that they call oualomam [odallomam] that they dry and split into long, thin strips and paint black or red 306 before using them. The red is from annatto, the black is from [85] the gum tree or the sandalwood which they burn. So that the dyes will be fast, they dissolve the second bark of a certain tree in water, which gives a strong liquid glue. They wet the reeds with this, then put on their annatto or black, then rub the reeds again with the gluey water. After drying in the sun, the paint never comes off. Others [512] among them make belts; others fishing lines and so forth. When they 307 go to bed, they always make a fire beneath their beds.

The Labors of The Women

512 The women are almost slaves of the men. They provide them 442 with food and drink, take care of the children, and follow them everywhere to prepare their food.

As soon as they get up, they also go to bathe. Then they begin to scrape and shred manioc, make bread for breakfast, and prepare whatever they have for their husbands. Breakfast over, the women go to work. Some go to their gardens to plant manioc or sweet potatoes with a pointed stick, since they do not use hoes; others weed.

303 The men do not trouble at all with that. The women who stay at 442 the hut make cotton hammocks or make oil to rub or grease their husbands' hair with. They make this oil from a seed which they call cousheu. They first let the seed rot, then dry it over the fire, then knead it between their hands, often spitting on it. Then they put it in the sun for a while and afterwards throw it in their couleuvres and press it to squeeze out the oil. They also make oil from the

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Carib Baskets
Engraving of the beginning of the Eighteenth Century

222 seeds of prickly palmetto. They pile these in a mortar, boil them in
 442 water from time to time, and press them as stated above. Others
 223 scapin cotton, which occupation they resume at night by the fire. They
 152 also take care of the sick, and for that they apply themselves to learn-
 ing the medicinal plants which are good for the illnesses. They have
 some excellent remedies which are very [Bq] effective. We will
 someday know more about them, if it pleases God. Nevertheless,
 141 neither the men nor the women wear themselves out with work.

CHAPTER IX

Their Drinking Parties

273 We will not call them feasts because they only hold their debaucheries
 to drink and to get drunk, both the men and women. They just call
 them ouicou, which is the drink that they make from cassava, as
 strong as they can for these occasions. They hold them nearly every
 day in various places for various reasons. The most famous drinking
 152 party is for war. They hold one when the man and woman have their
 first male child. They likewise celebrate when they cut off all the
 hair of their children for the first time. Also when their boys are
 151 growing up and attain their adolescence they make them fast, and
 then hold a celebration. The young men in question capture a
 Manfénix or merlin or some other bird of prey and feed it for some
 time preceding the celebration. Then, everybody being assembled,
 the father of the young man takes the bird and kills it on the head of
 his son, and having crushed and ground the body of the bird, puts it
 into water. Then, after slashing the body of his son with agouti teeth
 or something else until the blood comes, he bathes and rubs him with
 this water. Afterwards they make the young man lie very straight
 152 in a bed which is hung from the top of the hut, and he must maintain
 this posture, or else (they imagine) he will become deformed. If
 he should bend over, he would remain bent, if he should bend a leg,
 the leg would always remain bent. They also make him fast for
 too long a time. Next, they dry the heart and feet of the bird and
 hang them around his neck. For some, who are stronger, they mix
 a great deal of pimento with the water of which we spoke, and make
 them eat the bird's heart, and imagine that that will make the boys
 valiant.

⁰⁰⁰
²⁷³
⁵³⁶ valiant. At some of these drinking parties they add the refinement of asking four of the company to dance. These, after [87] smearing themselves with a watery glue, cover themselves with down, which sticks to their flesh by means of this gum. Having entered into the place of the debauch, each of them is presented with a large gourd full of ouicou which he must drink. If one cannot down it all, the others squeeze his belly until he vomits what he has taken. Then he drinks the rest, and dances afterwards.

574 They hold one sort of feast which seems to have a little virtue and humanity also. When they have caught a tortoise or other fish of note they invite one of their relatives or friends to come eat part of it. When the guest arrives, the person responsible for receiving him hangs a hammock for him (note that their custom is to put a member of the household in charge of receiving visitors), and invites him to sit on it, which he does without saying a word. Then the women bring him cassava on a matoutou (if the cassava is spread out it means that he eats what he wants and then takes what is left with him; if it is folded, it means that having eaten his fill, he leaves the rest) or meat or ouicou. The husband of the woman who serves him says: 'Here is some cassava or ouicou for you.' The other replies: yao, 'good' (this is their: thank you). While he is eating no one interrupts him, and only the one who invited him or the one who received him speaks to him. Having eaten, he says: 'Here is your matoutou, here is your couf [calabash dish].' The other has it taken away and goes to all the men present. 'Let us,' he says, 'greet him.' All go to do so, one after another. The women scarcely participate in this, and only say: kelfatibou [chilefribou] (1), 'have you come?' After that they

1. According to Moreau de Jonnés, who visited the Caribs of Saint Vincent, this expression means: 'welcome.'

chat and drink together. They lift their glass, saying: 'to you'— and the other answers: yao, 'good.'

They practice those ceremonies for all unexpected visitors, except that they do not hang beds except for the most notable. The latter's hair is oiled and cared for by the women both as he enters and as

574 he leaves. They observe some of these ceremonies for Father Raymond when he goes to see them.

[68]

CHAPTER X

Their Commerce

439 They trade with everyone with whom they are at peace. But their trading does not involve much of value, and they do not ask for much. When they come to see us they bring tortoises, pigs, chickens, parrots, fish, pineapples, cotton hammocks and other works of theirs. In exchange we give them axes, bill-hooks, knives, cloth to make sails for their pirogues, glass beads, crystals, and other bagatelles. When they have more of these tools than they need, they carry them to other Caribs of the islands or mainland and exchange them for caracolis, green stones (which are good against serious illness), or other similar things. That is the extent of their commerce or trade.

[7] Previously, when they had no commerce with the Europeans, they used stone axes and knives. They made their fish-hooks from scales of the tortoise, or, probably, from the border shell, which is harder than the other scales. One still sees these old instruments among them, although they no longer use them.

CHAPTER XI

Their War, Enemies and Weapons

[24] Our Caribs do not make war properly speaking, since they never [72] fight a pitched battle but make surprise raids. Also, they hardly attack those who are on their guard unless they have a tremendous advantage in numbers. They have chiefs chosen from the most valiant and from those who have killed the most enemies. They do not choose young men, even if they are the sons of old chiefs. They choose mature and courageous men, whom they esteem a great deal while they still have all their strength, but to whom they no longer pay any attention when they become old. There are two at present

624at Dominica, [69] one of Basse-Terre called Oukalé, known to the French as Hamichon; the other of Capesterre called Halammena, and known to us as The Baron. He is the host of our Father Raymond. Outside of war, the chiefs have no authority over the others.

721 When they intend to go to war, the chief who has undertaken it gives a drinking party and harangues the guests to excite them. Or
203 else he sends his children around to all the carbets to announce the day of assembly and departure. They do not force anyone to go. They leave from Dominica in eight or ten pirogues armed in their fashion for war; they take along women only to cook and serve them, and leave them on some islet while they go to the encounter. If they have an important war, as when they invade the mainland to fight the Allouagues, they pick up warriors in passing from Martinique, Saint Vincent, Grenada (and Galibis), and form a rather powerful army, if they join courage and direction to number.

726 They rarely attack at night for fear they will kill each other, but rather attack at daybreak. They all give a horrible cry, which startles those who are not prepared for it. They readily fight in bright moonlight. Before the combat they consult the boye, who asks his demon what the fortunes of war will be. If they besiege their enemies, it is not for long, for they raise the siege by noon or night of the same day they start it. They have an implacable hatred of the Allouagues, a certain people of the mainland, and of the allies of the Allouagues who live on the island of Trinidad or by the rivers of the mainland, where there are innumerable nations. Sometimes our Caribs surprise the Allouagues, kill some of them and take prisoners. They eat the men, and make slaves of the women. The Allouagues render them the same service, often attack them, and give them no more gentle treatment.

726 They also make war with the English, with whom, however, they
648 tried to make peace, but which they were not able to achieve. Since the English never cease to kill them or make them slaves, they do the English as much harm as they can. They look for them in the islands they inhabit, especially at Antigua, which is a neighboring island, and kill and abduct them. We shall say [70] something in another part [of this account] of the war they had with us.

Before the French and English came to these islands, they harassed the Spanish, particularly on the island of Saint Jean de Portorico

726 [Puerto Rico?], which, however, never belonged to our Caribs. One
648 of the natives of Dominica told Father Raymond of a raid in which
they captured a large number of Negroes and butchered one of our
Fathers and smoked him to eat, but he had aroused in them such a
[24] reluctance that they never dared eat him. The narrator affirmed
that he was one of those present at that occasion. For some time now
they have abstained from eating the flesh of Christians.

411 Their weapons are the boutou and the bow and arrow. The boutou
is a sort of flat club, square at the end, 2 inches thick and 2 1/2
or 3 feet long, made of green wood, brazilwood, letter(?) wood, or
some other very heavy and massive wood. They cut a design on
[53] the end with their knife and fill it with wet mouchache, which is
fine manioc flour, for a rather pretty effect. Whoever is hit full
force with this club is crushed. Their bows are made of brazilwood,
which is rather stiff. Their cords are made of pita. Their arrows
are made of certain smooth stalks that grow at the tops of reeds and
which are tufted. These stalks are very light; and at the end of them
they put a shaft of green wood or other very hard wood, and make
notches on it as on a saw, only bigger so that the arrow cannot be
withdrawn without tearing the flesh around it and enlarging the
wound. They also use the spiny tail of the ray for arrow tips. They
rarely use iron. They poison the arrow with a venom so malignant
that without a prompt remedy one dies of the smallest wound.
They feather their arrows with parrot feathers or with others. To
start fires they shoot arrows wrapped in flaming cotton.

727 After the combat, they pillage thoroughly. If there are any dead
266 enemies they eat the arms and feet, and smoke the rest for their
return home. If they have taken any prisoners, they keep the males
to be killed and the females to [71] enslave. Each piece of plunder
belongs to the one who takes it. When they want to kill an
Allouague, the one who captured him holds a drinking party and
invites his friends. They tie the unhappy captive in a bed and starve
him for a long time. When everyone is assembled his master leads
the captive in and delivers the first light blow with his boutou and
the others then follow suit. After beating him to death, they cut
him into pieces and eat part of him at the time. Each one carries
a piece home which he eats with his family in great solemnity.

627 When one Carib kills another, they have no other justice but
what vengeance the parents of the killed man take, if the guilty one
does not pacify them with presents.

CHAPTER XII

Their Diseases, Death, Mourning, Burial, and Fancies Concerning The Soul

164 Nearly all the Caribs have that disease called the sickness of
757 Naples, or as others say, yaws, which is scarcely any better. The disease is fairly common among the Negroes, and some of the French also suffer from it. It is not, however, at least not always, the responsibility of Venus, since even small children have it. To cure themselves, they do not try sweating at all, but grate shellfish, which they swallow with water. They rub themselves with genipa, or with reed leaves burned with llana, which they call mouchao or miby. They do not get well as soon as patients who are made to sweat.

165 One sees very few other diseases among them, and it is a marvel that living such a mean life they are so healthy and fat and live so long. For it is certain that they usually live very long. It was only four or five months ago that the father of The Baron died, and his wife, The Baron's mother, still lives. The Baron, whose wife is still living, has a daughter; this daughter has a daughter and this latter already has children. So The Baron is a great-grandfather and his mother is a great-great grandmother [72] and The Baron's daughter, who is a grandmother herself, still has her own grandmother. And this is not the only example to be cited. Their long life must be attributed to their lack of cares.

751 They blame their demon for their diseases and if the illness is long and severe they call the bof'ayko to consult him about it. They
758 have a number of remedies which the women apply to the sick, but they treat the sick no more delicately than they do the healthy.

Relatives rarely or never visit their sick kin. Generally married
[704] people do not visit the sick, because, they say, their bodies emit a force which afflicts the sick even more. That is why when one of The Baron's sons was ill, neither his brother, his sisters, nor his father went to see him; only his mother treated him and she did not communicate at all with his father.

727 When some among them are killed in war, they do what they can to recover the bodies and bury them. Following is how they bury their dead.

764 They dig a round hole, three feet deep, in a hut, so that it will be under cover. They bathe the body, redden it all over, anoint the hair with oil, and truss it up as carefully as for one of their great feasts. They wrap the deceased in a cotton hammock and then put him in the hole in nearly the same posture as the child is in the womb of his mother, not upside down nor with the face against the ground, but straight, the feet below, the head up and resting on the knees. They then cover the hole with a board. That done, the women sit around the grave on their heels and cry, while their husbands clasp them with the left hand and stroke their arm with the right hand as if to lessen the pain. All the women strike up a lugubrious song punctuated with sighs and cries. While lamenting they throw dirt in the hole with their hands and then build a fire over it. They burn the dead man's old clothes or give them away. If the deceased had slaves, they kill them—but the slaves usually run away, and they are not chased.

765 The children of the deceased or his wife cut their hair in sign of mourning. They also fast one or two [73] months. When Father Raymond asked them if their fast did the dead any good, they said no, but that those who did not fast would age quicker because of it, or would not have a firm footing, would not see the fish in the water, or would be surprised by their enemies. These reasons seem pertinent even to the aged.

If one of the relatives is unable to attend the funeral, he comes to visit the grave and weeps there with the parents of the deceased. When they believe the body is decomposed, they again assemble at the tomb, and weep and trample over the grave. On the anniversary of the death they come to drown their melancholy and the memory of the deceased in an abyss of ouicou.

775 Otherwise concerning the soul after death, they have the notion that each man has three souls. One in his head, which is felt beating at the temples; another in the arms, which manifests itself in the pulse; and the other in the heart, which makes its movement strongly felt.

The soul of the heart goes directly to heaven to be blessedly happy, although they are unable to say just what this felicity consists in. The soul of the arm and of the head becomes maboya, that is, an evil spirit which torments them. They fear the maboya extremely,

775 for they attribute to them all of their frights, such as happened to one who, sleeping on his left side, pressed his spleen and had bad dreams as a result. Father Raymond noticed this and woke the man, and the Carib was grateful to him for having rescued him from the clutches of maboya, of whom he recounted several marvels. However, he could not conceive that this was only a dream.

[776] They believe there are still other evil spirits at the edge of the sea who cause their shipwrecks and whom they call oumokou. They also believe in some sort of place of torment in the middle of the earth, called touvalik, where the wicked go.

000 We know nothing more at present of the customs of our Caribs which merits writing down. It is true that we have recorded a great number of their follies, which it was perhaps not necessary to write down, and which were perhaps even unworthy of recording. We realized this, which is why we omitted many others which would have filled a large [74] book. However, we have not left them all out, although we would have preferred to do so, because the reader would not have been able to know their temperament or their barbarism if we had not rather plainly represented their customs, although brutal and truly savage.